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THE HISTORY OF ONE TREE HILL,

THE VOLCANIC MOUNTAIN KNOWN TO THE
MAORI PEOPLE AS

“MAUNGAKIEKIE.”

Maungakiekie rises from the centre of an area of 400 acres, comprising Cornwall Park (the gift of Sir John Logan Campbell) and the One Tree Hill Recreation Reserve, and which together constitute the great Recreation Park of Auckland.

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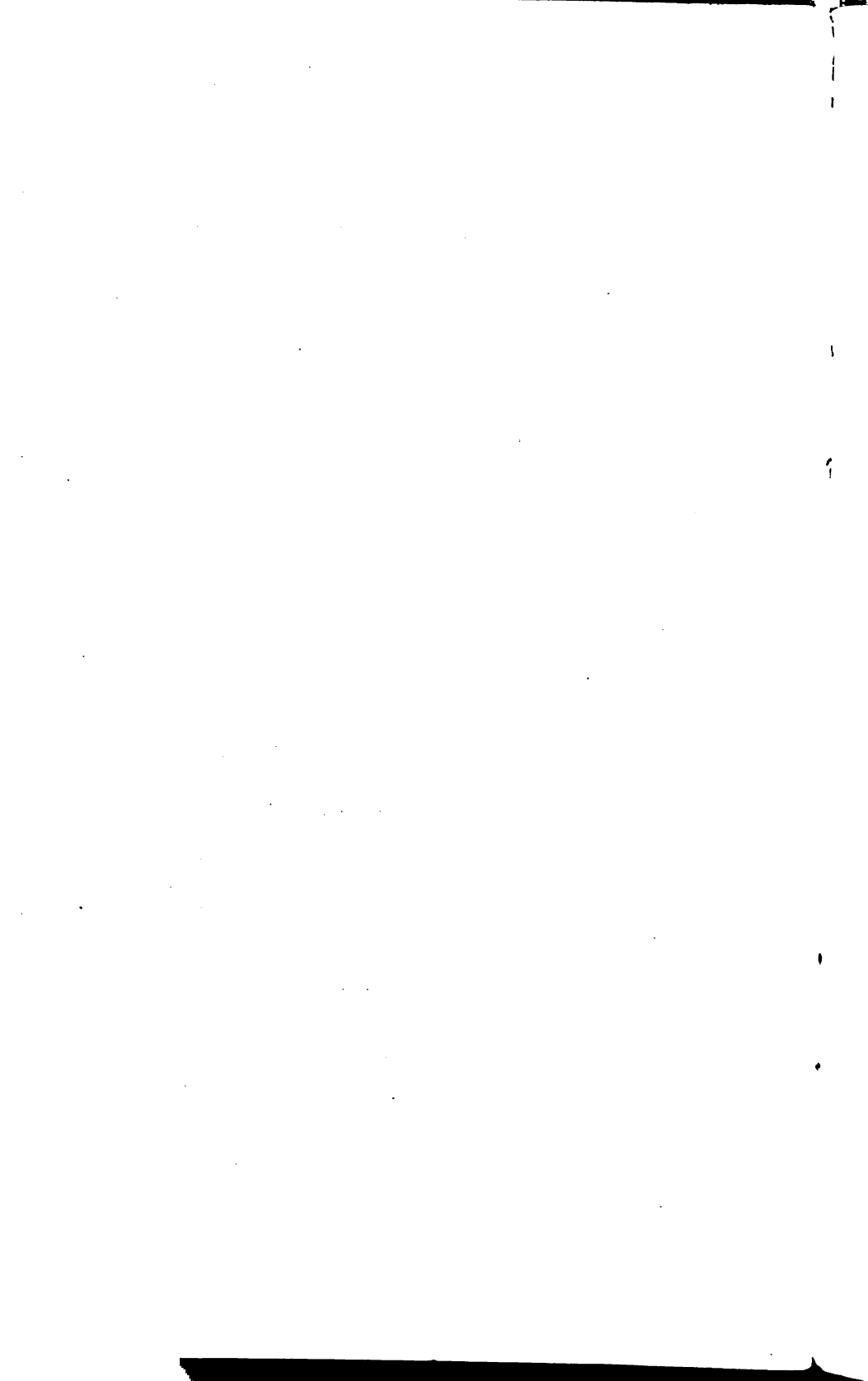




MAUNGAKIEKIE-KNOWN AS ONE TREE HILL



THE LANDSCAPE FROM MAUNGAKIEKIE: CORNWALL PARK IN THE FOREGROUND. THE GIFT OF
SIR JOHN LOGAN CAMPBELL TO THE PEOPLE OF NEW ZEALAND.



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THE HISTORY OF ONE TREE HILL,

THE VOLCANIC HILL KNOWN TO THE MAORI PEOPLE AS

“MAUNGAKIEKIE,”

BY

M. H. WYNYARD.

”)

(Maungakiekie rises from the centre of an area of 400 acres, which constitutes the great Recreation Park of Auckland.)

IT was somewhere about the year 1350 that the Maoris, in their canoe Tainui, after their journey across the Pacific from distant Hawaikai, entered the Hauraki Gulf, and little imagination is needed to picture how even their phlegmatic disposition would melt into wonder and exultation at the scene that, as they paddled along its shores, rose before their eyes. Passing island after island and headland after headland, they opened up new vistas of beauty in all directions, and finally there lay before them a belt of country, clothed in bush and fern, and dotted over with rounded cones in all directions. Their mariner's eye would note how perfect was the harbour that they had entered, while their warrior wit would at once single out the possibilities of these hills for easily-converted pas. And though the major part of the crew of the Tainui did not immediately stop here, they seemingly retained a lingering regard for the country they had passed, and many of them and their descendants finally returned to the isthmus and occupied its hills.

It is reported by students of Maori history that these Maoris, instead of exterminating the original inhabitants, the "tangata whenuas," of the land, intermarried with them to a considerable extent, and gradually assimilated them into their own race, much as the English race is in turn doing with the Maori to-day. These first Maori descendants from the Tainui crew, called by Judge Gudgeon the Ngaoho, and their connections, the Ngaiwi and the Ngatitai (all afterwards combined under the comprehensive name of Wai-o-hua), settled and multiplied on the Auckland isthmus, and built the great pas on Maungakiekie (One Tree Hill), and the other mounts around, which remain to-day an eternal monument to their skill and energy. The native names (lost in the main to the present generation in the modern English designations with which they have been shrouded) of the other hill pas were, Maungawhau (Mount Eden), Maungarei (Mount Wellington), Taurarua (Parnell), Te Tou (Hobson Street), Rarotonga (Mount Smart), Te Tatua (Three Kings), Owairaka (Mount Albert), Remuera, Mangere, Kohimaramara, and Omahu (Little Rangitoto).

In the early days of Maori settlement the natives seem to have been peacefully inclined enough, though that their natural love of war was only dormant was evidenced by the preparations made, in the building of their villages, against attack from other tribes. During this early peaceful period, which extended for about three centuries after their landing here, the Maori race must have grown and multiplied to a great extent, as there is ample evidence that they occupied fairly closely all of the northern part of the island. Nowhere, however, do they appear to have settled so densely as in the Auckland isthmus—"Tamaki makarau," as they called it ("Tamaki of a hundred lovers")—and when it is remembered that the waters of the Waitemata and Manukau teemed with fish—"matatai" (i.e., "Fruits of the Ocean")—that the warm volcanic soil around the base of the hills was specially favourable to the growth of the kumara and taro, and that both the land and waterway

between the northern peninsula and the heart of the island passed through their borders, there is little wonder at the large population that existed there. It is of interest to know that the natives had a great regard for the richness of the volcanic soils around Maungakiekie—so much so, indeed, that it was a common saying that "If you want to see the awgheto (i.e., caterpillars, particularly partial to the kumara), go to the farm of Takuri," which was a backhanded way of saying that the said farm of Takuri, a lady of rustic propensities, who owned what is now mainly the One Tree Hill estate, was especially fruitful in kumaras.

During these piping times of peace there are very few incidents that have come down to us. About the year 1500 the nomadic Ngatiawa passed through the isthmus on their journey to the far North, and a century later, tired of their sojourn there, and of their fights with the Ngapuhi, passed south again under the chief Kahununu, he who carried with him the tuatara lizard to scare the people in his path. Some short time after this we hear of that David of Maori history, Hawakau, passing through to Mount Egmont, the "sacred mountain beyond Waitara," as it is called, where he was destined to overthrow the dreaded Goliath, Puarata, he of the wooden head. And, further, about the year 1700 we hear of the romantic elopement of Puhihuia, daughter of the chief of Maungawhau (Mount Eden), with Te Ponga, chief of Awitu, and their flight together to the Manukau through the Epsom Valley, hotly but ineffectually pursued by her scandalised papa.

But gradually, as the numbers of the people increased, strife crept into the midst of the growing nation. Tribal relations became strained, and the native doctrine of "utu," the vendetta of the Maori, tended to plunge the race into lengthy and bloody war. And, at the commencement of the 18th century, 200 years ago, fierce war, indeed, became rampant throughout the land. About this time the Ngatiwhatua, driven from the far North, broke over and captured the whole of Kaipara down to the confines of Waiohau, and the latter

fearing—and with reason, as the sequel showed—that the Ngatiwhatua would next endeavour to conquer them, strengthened their hill pas and made ready for a stormy day. It was about this time that there arose Kiwi Tamaki, chief of the Waiohua, a son of the lady farmer Takuri, whom I have had occasion to mention above. This great rangatira, who appears to have been a most powerful leader and military genius, chose Maungakiekie as his chief pa. It was he who completed its massive fortifications and made it the central pa of his tribe. It was well suited to be such. Situated in the centre of the fertile plain, with a ring of hills around it, fortified into outlying pas, with its massive slopes palisaded and entrenched, forming an abiding place for fully 4000 inhabitants, with the main sea and water-ways passing beside it, it formed an ideal fortification, whence the holders could sweep down upon an attacking host, or withstand, with advantage on their side, a sudden fierce attack.

The conical top of the hill was known to the natives as Te Totara-i-ahua, and has reference to the totara tree which grew there and formed a landmark for miles around. This totara was cut down by some vandal of a pakeha, and though Sir John Logan Campbell, to whom this district owes so much, improvised a fresh grove of trees to replace it, we cannot but deplore the fact that so historic a relic was wantonly destroyed. This tree was held sacred by the natives. It was originally planted, as was frequently a custom with Maoris, which might with advantage be followed by their more modern successors, to commemorate the birth of a son. The totara tree on One Tree Hill was planted on the auspicious occasion of the birth of one Koroki, the son of a chief of the Ngatiawa, who first saw the light of day on Maungakiekie when his tribe was on its migration back from Hokianga to Taranaki, as previously recorded.

The fortifications on the hill itself were (judged from the standard of the military requirements of the time) massive and complete. The "Tihi," or central fortress, was Te Totara-i-ahua. Due west of that, across the main crater (for Maungakiekie has three craters) is a lower pa,

smaller than the Tihi, but the best-preserved of all the fortifications on the hill. On the north and south of the crater are two other small pas, all perfect little forts in themselves, and with ditches and ramparts still plainly observable dividing them from the other defences. To the east of the hill-top a shoulder of the hill has been carved into terraces, and forms a strong outpost on that side. The east and west craters—whose lips were, in some of those enormous convulsions of Nature of long ago, of which the whole countryside gives visual evidence, blown out over the countryside—were cut into gigantic steps, and now look not unlike the auditorium of some noble Colosseum. To the south, beyond the narrow neck that divides these craters, the hill opens out like a fan. Across its centre, east and west, run two parallel lines of earthworks, while every available rise in the ground has been turned to advantage by the native military genius of the past. Everywhere are evidences of skill and energy, and whole days could be spent in interesting examination of this 100 acres of terrace, rampart, ditch, and earthwork. The terraces, besides being of service in fighting, were necessary to give living room on the otherwise steep sides of the hill. They were, in the main, palisaded, with fantastic head-posts at the corners, and the uprights tied together with flax. The defences communicated with one another through small gaps in the palisading, which, in the event of attack, could be readily barred.

The natives kept considerable stores of food, such as dried fish, shellfish, kumara, and taro, on the hill, and the remains of their food-pits are plainly visible to this day. The whares were built on the terraces, and on the summits of the hills. The higher or exposed dwellings had ramparts of earth thrown up near them, and these served the double purpose of extra defence and protection from the wind, and it is interesting to note that these ramparts are more pronounced on the south and west of the pas, the positions most exposed to the prevailing winds. Water was caught from rain showers and

stored in hollowed tree-trunks. Such a supply would have been insufficient to enable a long siege to be successfully withstood, but in those days of close combat a long siege was an unknown incident.

To return to the history of the hill. It was, as I have said, about the year 1700 that war became prevalent in the land. In fear of the approach of the Ngatiwhatua from the north, and to guard against the Ngatipaoa and Ngatimaru of Coromandel and Thames, the Waitemata tribes banded together in a confederacy, under the general name of Wai-o-hua. Their chief, Kiwi Tamaki, mentioned above, came into notoriety about the year 1730, and under his regime the tribe speedily became one of the most feared and powerful in the land. He was always at war with one tribe or another, and for a time with unbroken success. It is still told that, when desiring to summon his tribesmen to a council of war, or to warn them of immediate danger, he caused to be beaten on the top of Maungakiekie his great "pahu" or gong, which was specially constructed and embellished with the "poenamū," or greenstone, and when sounded from the top of the hill, close beside the sacred totara tree (then about 150 years old), could be heard across the countryside for many miles around.

Though Kiwi was a warlike chief, cruel and relentless to his enemies, he was noted for his hospitality to friendly tribes, for the extent and luxuriance of the ceremonies and entertainments given by him to visiting chiefs and their attendants, and for the feasts, dances, and songs which he prepared for their edification. He appears altogether to have been a somewhat wonderful individual, with varied accomplishments, and was certainly the most notable chief amongst those who held sway over the Auckland isthmus.

Unfortunately, however, the rise of the Waiohua was not more sudden and complete than their fall. Apparently Kiwi put too much faith in his own prowess, for he did not temper valour with discretion. It seems that in their conquest of the

Kaipara the Ngatiwhatua had come in contact with and defeated some of the outlying hapus of the Waiohuria. Soon after their establishment in Kaipara, one of the principal Ngatiwhatua chiefs, Temu-pakihi—head of Te Taou hapu—died, and, as was customary on similar occasions, surrounding tribes who were in any way related to the deceased were invited to attend the tangi. Among those invited was Kiwi. He came with a number of followers, whose arms were concealed beneath their garments. The Ngatiwhatua outshone themselves in trying to do justice to the visitors, endeavouring to emulate the ceremonies for which the great chief who honoured them was so famous. In consequence, when they retired to rest, they were worn out and weary, and, seeing this, Kiwi and his followers arose and cruelly butchered 200 of their entertainers in their sleep. A large number, however, managed to escape, and before long, under Te Wahaakiki, organised an avenging force to raid the Waiohuria country. At the same time the Ngatimaru (from the Thames district), who had suffered somewhat similarly to the Kaipara tribes, rose against the Waiohuria, probably in concert with the Ngatiwhatua. At Titirangi the avengers from the North met Kiwi, and after some hard fighting defeated him and drove him back on Maungakiekie. Then, skirting past the hills, the invaders fell upon the outer pas at Tamaki Heads, and a few of the minor forts. But the places were too hot to hold, as the whole isthmus was now in arms against them, and they retreated after several defeats to Kaipara, pursued right up to their homes by the Waiohuria under Kiwi. Having, however, obtained reinforcements, and the Waiohuria returning to the isthmus, the Kaipara tribes made further attacks on their enemy. This time the army of Ngatiawa contented itself in the first place in attacking the outlying villages of the Waiohuria, and occupying the foothills of the Waitakereis—so keeping in direct touch with their own country. Thence by night they crossed the Manukau Harbour, near the Heads, on rafts improvised out of rushes, and stormed and carried Tarataua, the chief fortress of the Waiohuria on the Awitu Isthmus.

These pinpricks were more than the impatient Kiwi could stand. The sound of his great gong on Te Totara-i-ahua sounded over the countryside, and, forming on Maungakiekie, he advanced his forces by way of the Whau portage against the Ngatiwhatua, sending a fleet of canoes from Onehunga along the shores of the Manukau with others of his followers. The Ngatiwhatua, under Te Wahaakiaki, were discovered at Paruroa, near Little Muddy Creek. Being taken by surprise, they retreated before Kiwi's army up a steep spur to the crest of the ridge, where, turning suddenly, they fell fiercely upon the Waiohua. In the melee that followed, the two chiefs met, and, recognising one another, closed in mortal conflict. Both fell to the ground with the force of the onslaught, but the Ngatiwhatua chief, getting his mere free first, brained his opponent before he could rise.

Upon the death of their leader the Waiohua lost heart, and the fierce Ngatiwhatuas, following up their success, cut them down right and left. Kiwi's brother, Tokowaru, did his best to stop the rout, but he too was overcome and slain, and with his fall the battle was practically over. That this fight of Paruroa was more than a mere skirmish can be readily conceived when it is stated that, according to the victors' calculations, more than 3000 of the enemy were killed, and the streams ran red with the blood of the slain. The remnant of the Waiohua retreated on Maungakiekie. The Ngatiwhatua, after resting and feasting on what they suggestively called "the fish of the war-god," proceeded by canoe to Onehunga, where they landed, and, after a stubborn resistance, took the pas on the hill, and the citadel of Te Totara-i-ahua, driving the fugitives through Otahuhu, out of the isthmus, to Papakura and Waikato. After the defeat of the Waiohua, the Ngatiwhatua occupied the land, under their chief, Te Tuperiri. Like his predecessor, Te Tuperiri chose One Tree Hill for his chief pa, and from here he governed the whole of the desolate country—a short year before the fruitful inheritance of mighty Waiohua, who had now ceased to exist as a tribe. Such is the fate of war.

But, though victorious in their conflicts, the Ngatiwhatuas had suffered severely themselves, and the portion who occupied this district—known afterwards as the Ngaoho, the same name as that held by one of the confederated tribes whom they had destroyed—evaded as far as possible all conflict with the fierce warriors of Waikato and Thames, until their children had sufficient time to grow into fighting men. Once we hear of Te Tuperiri descending from Maungakiekie to attack a remnant of the Waiohūa at Mangere. These latter, suspecting attack, surrounded their pa with pipi shells, so that in case of a night advance they might be roused by the crunching of the feet of the Ngaoho on the shells. Divining the ruse, however, when he came to the white cordon around the trenches, Te Tuperiri threw his mat over it, and, following his example, the whole war party crossed noiselessly into the pa and massacred the defenders. A few escaped, but a number, who took refuge in a cave, were discovered and smoked or burnt out, insomuch that, as the story goes, the Ngaoho “had nothing to do but to drag them forth and eat them.”

With the exception of some minor fights of this kind, apparently undertaken “just to keep their hand in,” the Ngaoho dwelt in peace for about 40 years. At the end of this time the Ngati-poa tribe from the Thames raided the district, the Ngaoho retreating, after several defeats, to Waitakerei, where, being joined by others of the Ngatiwhatua, they in turn defeated the invaders and forced them back to their canoes. In retaliation, Ngati-poa made a later raid in 1793, and attacked and overcame the Ngaoho on the Tamaki River, near Panmure.

The Ngaoho now found that this fruitful isthmus, so desirable in many respects, was rather too hot a place to hold, and, save by old Tuperiri, who stuck manfully through all to his citadel of Maungakiekie, the whole countryside became practically deserted, and the minor hill pas fell gradually into decay.

This brings us to the commencement of the present century, and really completes the native history of the hill. It was occupied for some time during the years following 1800, but, with the coming of the pakeha and his Gospel of Peace, the necessity of living in fortified villages gradually passed away, and the inhabitants removed to Orakei and Ihuamatao, to be near the seashore and the fish, which has, especially since the abolition of cannibalism, been their chief article of food.

But before the beneficial influence of the missionary had time to bear much fruit, the red hand of war once more fell heavily on this isthmus. This time the danger came from the far North, the great Ngapuhi tribe, led by the redoubtable Hongi Ika. Armed with the white man's musket, the invaders swept right through the island, killing and massacring in all directions. For close on seven years this Napoleon of New Zealand was the terror of the country. His superior arms gave him a great advantage over other tribes, an advantage of which he availed himself to the full. In 1822 he swept down once more. The residents of One Tree Hill and the Auckland Isthmus met him at the Mokoia pa at Panmure, close above the present bridge, but though the Ngaoho and their allies fought valiantly (one chief, Rangiohenua, of the Ngatipaoa alone slayed 30 of the besiegers), the odds were too great, the pa was taken, and a large majority of its defenders relentlessly slain.

A few of the defeated escaped, and subsequently dwelt on the southern slopes of One Tree Hill and at Onehunga, and later on at Mount Hobson, Orakei, and Remuera. But the glory of Maungakiekie had departed. Upon the founding of Auckland in 1840 its appearance, its fortifications, its pipi-shell banks, its kumara pits, and the bones of its defenders among the rocks, told, as they still tell, of its former importance and population. But all was silent as the dead. Not one of the old inhabitants was left upon the hill, and it stood, and still stands, a symbol of a former greatness, and a

dumb monument of a people whose bones have long been mingled with its dust.

Such is the history of Maungakiekie and its wonderful Maori people, who in times past battled for its possession. But all things have now changed, and the pakeha of to-day ascends the mount, not knowing he treads on sacred Maori ground, and one of the most coveted dwelling places of that ancient race, the greatest people in all the islands of Oceana.

One half century has sufficed to change the Maori from a primitive savage to a civilised and educated being, capable of taking his place in the Parliament of New Zealand, with dignity to himself and enlightened assistance to his fellow pakeha members of the British race. Surely the history of the world can show no greater example of Evolution than this, and it is alike a monument to the colonising and ameliorating influence of the Briton, a striking evidence of the great intellectual capacity of the Maori, and a happy augury for the future of this, the most interesting and wonderful of the alien races now embraced within the wide boundaries of the British Empire.

[FOOTNOTE.—The historical information in the foregoing narrative has been collected from numerous sources, among the chief being Mr. Percy Smith's "Peopling of the North," and the famous "Orakei Judgment," of the late Mr. F. D. Fenton, Judge of the Native Land Court. This country owes a debt of gratitude to the works of the gifted archeologist, and the well-stored archives of the Native Land Court, for it is to them alone that the historian of the future will be able to turn for his information on the traditions, characteristics, and lore of the ancient Maori race.]

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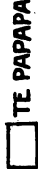
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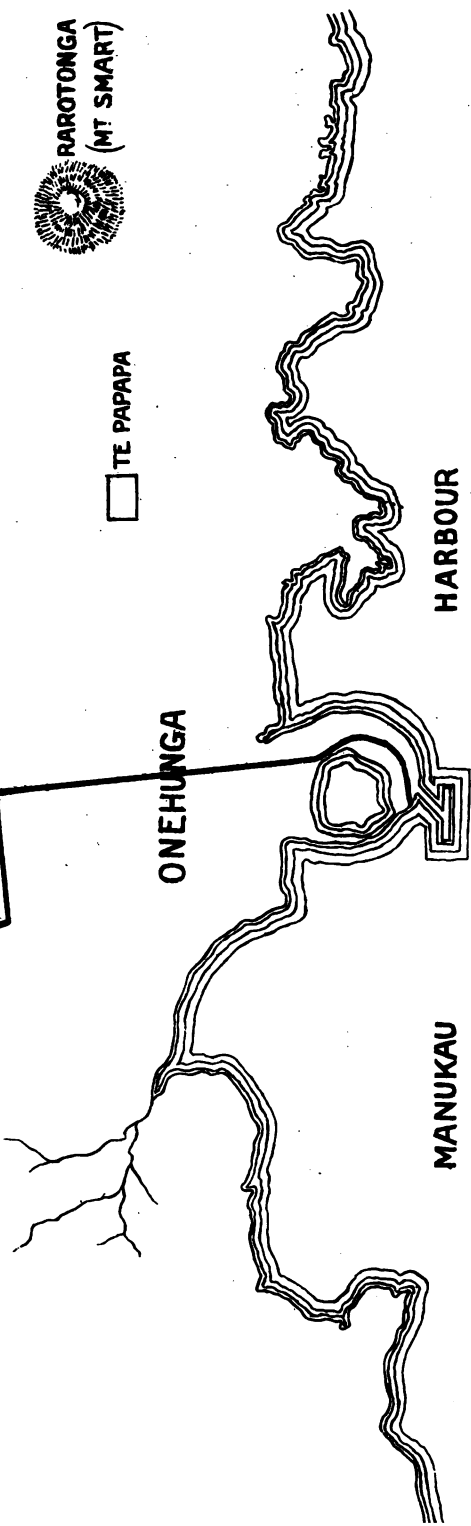
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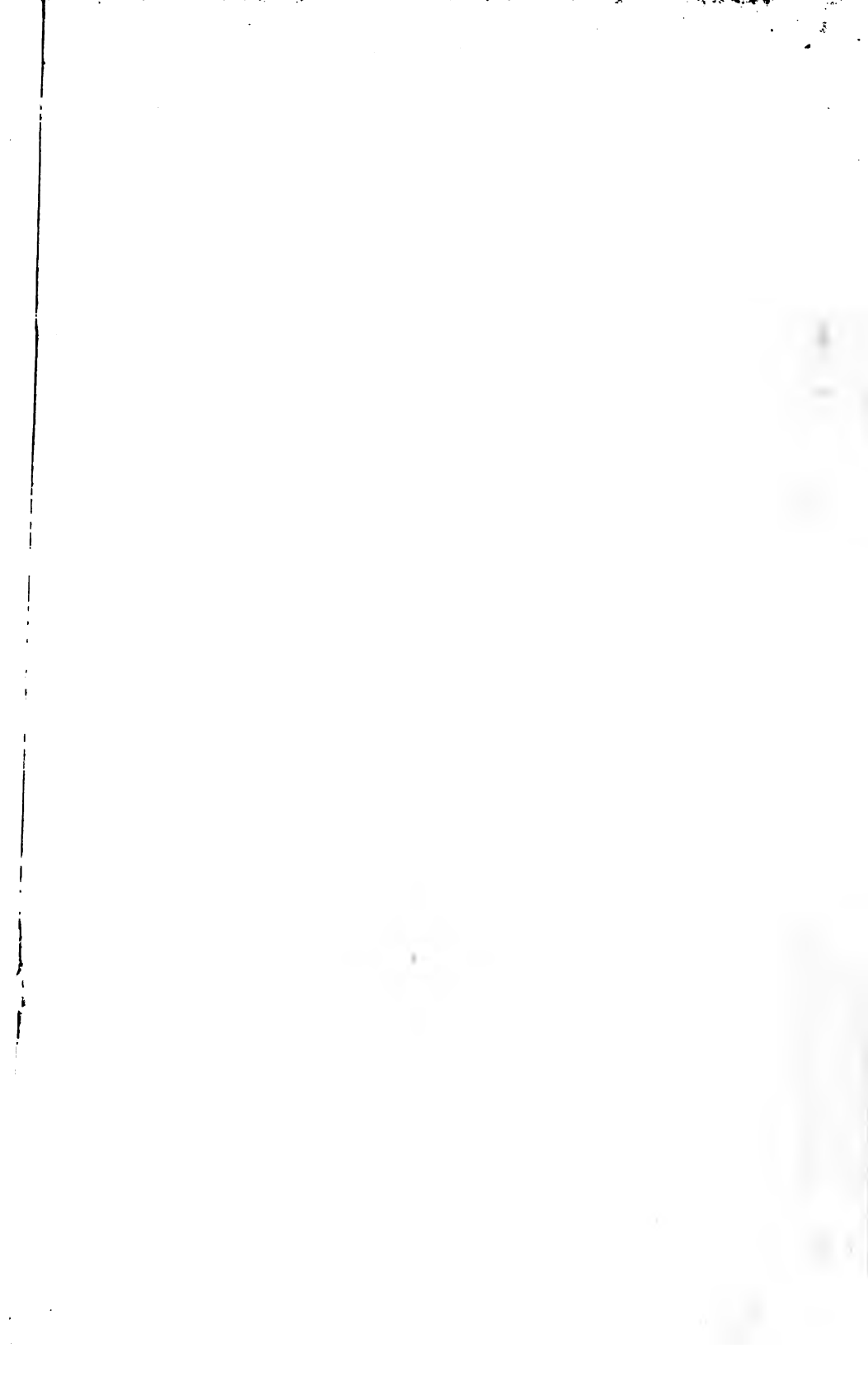
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